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**Questions relating to information**

# Questions relating to information

## Report of the Secretary-General

*Summary*

The present report, prepared in response to General Assembly resolution 65/107 B, provides highlights of recent strategic communications work of the Department of Public Information on key issues, including the Millennium Development Goals, sustainable development and climate change, international peace and security and human rights. The activities of the network of United Nations information centres, whose support is crucial to the implementation of the Department's communications campaigns, are also reviewed. The report highlights the Department's services to the media and civil society, with a particular emphasis on the expanded use of new information and communications technologies. It also provides an update on the Department's outreach activities, including the organization of a global Model United Nations and the newly launched United Nations Academic Impact initiative.

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# I. Introduction

1. In paragraph 83 of its resolution 65/107 B, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to the Committee on Information at its thirty-third session and to the Assembly at its sixty-sixth session on the activities of the Department of Public Information and on the implementation of all recommendations and requests contained in that resolution. Accordingly, the Department submitted three reports for consideration by the Committee at its thirty-third session, held from 27 April to 6 May 2011 (A/AC.198/2011/2, A/AC.198/2011/3 and A/AC.198/2011/4). The deliberations of the Committee with regard to those reports are reflected in the report of the Committee on its thirty-third session (A/66/21).

2. The present report updates the information provided to the Committee on Information at its thirty-third session, and describes activities undertaken by the Department from February to July 2011 through its three subprogrammes: strategic communications services, news services and outreach services.

# II. Strategic communications services

## A. Thematic issues

### Millennium Development Goals

3. In order to sustain momentum on the Millennium Development Goals, a system-wide task force of the United Nations Communications Group, composed of more than 25 partners, drafted common messages. In addition, the Department promoted the advocacy group of the Secretary-General on the Millennium Development Goals, for which a website was launched at the end of April (www.un.org/millenniumgoals/advocates).

### Sustainable development and climate change

4. Leading up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, to be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 2012, the Department coordinated activities to promote informed discussion on sustainable development and related issues, such as forests, oceans, biodiversity and climate change. Through a dedicated task force of the United Nations Communications Group, the Department coordinated the development of a system-wide communications strategy for the Conference that included common messages and a logo. The Department worked to promote the implementation of the Cancún Agreements and the launch of a report on renewable energy by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. In addition, it played a lead role in promoting United Nations participation in Earth Hour and other efforts to promote sustainability, including on World Environment Day, with a staff-targeted campaign to reduce the use of paper. On biodiversity, the Department worked to increase the number of signatories to the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from Their Utilization to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

5. For the International Year of Forests, which was observed in 2011, a number of United Nations information centres participated in film festivals, poster competitions, tree-planting events and other awareness-raising activities. For

example, United Nations Information Centre Canberra established a partnership with the Canberra Institute of Technology and the Australian National Botanic Gardens for a year-long photographic competition and United Nations Information Centre Rio de Janeiro provided support for a series of activities, including a conference on forests, in São Paulo organized by the Instituto Humanitare in partnership with HSBC Bank Brazil.

**Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries**

6. In preparation for the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, held in Istanbul, Turkey, from 9 to 13 May, the Department carried out extensive public information outreach activities by preparing key messages, a comprehensive press kit in English and French and four op-eds. At the conference, it accredited and worked with 500 journalists.

**High-level meeting on HIV and AIDS**

7. The Department provided communications support to the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), both before and during a three-day high-level meeting held in New York from 8 to 10 June 2011. An official website in the six official languages of the United Nations was launched and the Department's social media team worked closely with UNAIDS to connect with young audiences.

**High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases**

8. In the lead-up to the High-Level Meeting of the General Assembly on the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases, to be held in New York on 19 and 20 September 2011, the Department organized a media forum in June 2011 in partnership with the American Cancer Society. Close to 60 journalists from more than 45 countries were invited to briefings at United Nations Headquarters on the causes, incidence and prevention of cancer, diabetes and cardiovascular and lung diseases.

**Women's issues**

9. The Department continued to support the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) by promoting its launch at the end of February, including through social media platforms and a website developed specifically for International Women's Day. Furthermore, the Department worked closely with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to develop a section of the peacekeeping website on gender and peacekeeping in support of the launch of a 10-year study on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security.

10. The Department promoted the fifty-fifth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, held in New York on 12 March 2010, from 22 February to 4 March 2011 and on 14 March 2011, by reaching out to media and by publicizing special events held during the session, including for the "UNiTE to End Violence against Women" campaign of the Secretary-General.

11. United Nations Regional Information Centre Brussels launched a Europe-wide advertising competition called "Create4theUN" on the theme "No to violence against women".

12. United Nations Information Centre Ankara established a partnership with the Turkish daily newspaper *Milliyet* by which the newspaper posted, for more than a month, one of the centre's campaign banners on its home page, which received more than 1 million visitors daily.

13. United Nations Information CentreSana'a produced, with the support of the United Nations Communications Group in Yemen, three radio pieces dealing with women's education, work and early marriage. The pieces were aired on Sana'a Radio.

**Global action against racism**

14. On the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (21 March), a videoconference on racial discrimination with a special focus on people of African descent was organized at Headquarters for 200 middle- and high-school students from Canada, Trinidad and Tobago and the United States of America. The network of United Nations information centres launched a range of outreach activities.

**Nelson Mandela International Day**

15. For the second observance of Nelson Mandela International Day, on 18 July 2011, the Department focused its campaign on the theme "Take action! Inspire change" to encourage people to devote 67 minutes of their time to public service in honour of Nelson Mandela's 67-year struggle for freedom and equal rights. As part of the campaign, the United Nations partnered with the Central Park Conservancy in New York on a park improvement project that involved painting handrails and park benches. Through a partnership with MTV, a special feature on the Day was developed for a blog entitled "MTV Act", through which the television channel highlights small actions that ordinary citizens can do to bring about change in their lives and communities.

**Commemoration of the genocide in Rwanda**

16. The Department marked the seventeenth annual commemoration of the genocide in Rwanda under the theme "Rebuilding Rwanda: reconciliation and education". On 7 April, a memorial ceremony was organized at Headquarters in cooperation with the Permanent Mission of Rwanda to the United Nations. Survivors of the genocide spoke at the event. In addition, the Department made arrangements for a student conference on the topic. The Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide and a genocide survivor addressed the students. A novel for young people entitled *Tugire Ubumwe: Let's Unite!* was distributed worldwide.

**The question of Palestine**

17. The 2011 international media seminar on peace in the Middle East, which was organized by the Department, was held on 12 and 13 July in Budapest. Co-hosted by the Foreign Ministry of Hungary, the two-day meeting brought together about 100

current and former policymakers from Israel and the Palestinian Authority, as well as senior United Nations officials, international experts and media representatives. Participants examined the peace process in the light of the changing political landscape in the Arab world and discussed the role of new and visual media in promoting the peace agenda.

18. The 2011 annual training programme for Palestinian media practitioners is scheduled to take place at Headquarters from 31 October to 2 December. Ten Palestinian journalists working mainly in audio-visual media are expected to attend the five-week session, which will focus on providing hands-on skills training in radio and television production.

**United Nations peacekeeping**

19. The Department of Public Information, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support held their eighth annual training workshop at the United Nations Regional Service Centre at Entebbe, Uganda, from 18 to 21 April. The workshop focused on driving innovation and integration in the digital sphere, as well as on new recruitment policies for staff in the field.

20. The theme chosen for the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers was "Rule of law." The Department collaborated with the Departments of Peacekeeping Operations and of Field Support to highlight how peacekeeping operations work to strengthen the police, the judiciary and corrections institutions with the slogan "Law. Order. Peace.". Public events at Headquarters included a wreath-laying ceremony, a ceremony for awarding medals to peacekeepers and the release of a video on the work done by peacekeepers on the rule of law.

21. United Nations Information Centre Bujumbura jointly organized an event with the United Nations Office in Burundi, the local office of the African Union, the Ministry of National Defence of Burundi and former combatants to commemorate the Day. United Nations Information Centre Jakarta organized a live radio talk show on women in United Nations peacekeeping, which was aired on Radio Republik Indonesia. United Nations Information Centre Ouagadougou organized several activities to raise awareness of the Day, including a 30-minute television programme developed in partnership with Burkina National Television and a conference to brief students from the local military academy in cooperation with the Ministry of Defence of Burkina Faso.

**New Partnership for Africa's Development**

22. Through its quarterly magazine *Africa Renewal/Afrique renouveau* and a redesigned and regularly updated website, the Department continued to raise global awareness of and support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development Planning and Coordinating Agency. Twelve short feature articles were published in 224 different media in 54 countries (335 times in English and 193 times in French) between March and June 2011. The Africa Section of the Department continued to increase its presence online and its use of social media tools to reach the small but growing African population with access to the Internet, as well as audiences in developed countries.

### International Year of Youth

23. The Department's promotion of the International Year of Youth resulted in a range of activities, from lectures and briefings to youth groups and students to press conferences, seminars, workshops, debates, interviews and radio and television talk shows. United Nations information centres included a youth perspective in other major United Nations observances and in the campaign to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

24. United Nations Information Centre Manama, in cooperation with Ajial, an organization that brings together youth in Bahrain and in the Gulf region to encourage them to participate in achieving the Millennium Development Goals and the "Bahrain 2030 Vision" initiative, marked the International Year of Youth by organizing a basketball tournament for young people and a women's league football tournament in Bahrain, among other activities.

25. As part of its year-long calendar of activities to promote the International Year of Youth, United Nations Information Centre New Delhi partnered with the organizers of "Be on the street", a street theatre festival bringing together theatre groups from 20 New Delhi colleges.

## B. United Nations Information Centres

### Visual material for communications campaigns

26. As mentioned above, the United Nations information centres continue to use various communications tools and forge partnerships with Governments, media organizations, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions and other members of civil society. In doing so, they are increasingly using films and other visual materials.

27. United Nations Regional Information Centre Brussels organizes a monthly film screening ("Cine ONU") followed by a debate. The event has expanded to other countries, including France, Germany, Iceland and Israel.

28. United Nations Information Centre New Delhi held the eighth edition of We Care Film Fest, an annual international festival of documentary films on disability issues launched by the non-governmental organization Brotherhood.

### Collaborative arrangements with local broadcasters

29. The United Nations information centres have increased collaboration with national broadcasters in disseminating United Nations videos and films and making arrangements for joint productions.

30. United Nations Information Centre Islamabad has arranged for a joint communications effort with the support of the United Nations Communications Group in Pakistan to broadcast, in collaboration with Search for Common Ground, 12 featured radio programmes on priority issues for the Organization throughout the country from July to December 2011.

31. United Nations Information Centre Mexico City concluded an agreement with the Instituto Latinoamericano de la Comunicación Educativa, an organization that specializes in the development, research and application of information and

communications technologies for distance learning and the production of educational materials, with the aim of improving the quality of education in Latin America.

**Building communications capacity of staff of the Department of Public Information in the field**

32. Recognizing the importance of enhancing the communications skills of its staff, particularly those in the field, the Department organized several training courses. In June 2011, the Department arranged a media workshop, held in Vienna, for its communications staff from United Nations Information Centre Moscow and United Nations offices in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan and Ukraine. The workshop included sessions on new media, crisis communications and techniques for managing interviews and press conferences.

33. In addition, the Department continued to work with the Office of Human Resources Management to offer the very popular eight-session long-distance learning course entitled "Writing for the web". Since the beginning of 2011, staff members at 19 locations have taken the course.

**Ongoing budgetary and security challenges**

34. The Department remained committed to maximizing its resources, both human and financial, and to using them as strategically and efficiently as possible. At some United Nations information centres, for example, posts of administrative assistants were being converted to knowledge management assistants as a way of strengthening the communications role that information centres play within country teams. In many cases, the physical space assigned to information centres had been reduced, either outright or by sharing common spaces and costs with others in country teams. As a result, some of the former assets of libraries belonging to information centres were donated to local universities and centres concentrated on helping clients access electronic resources and on reaching out to target audiences through workshops and presentations held away from centres.

35. Security remained a serious concern. The Department of Safety and Security continued to reassess the minimum operating security standards. As a result, expenditures on security measures increased by approximately a third compared with the previous biennium.

**United Nations information centre in Luanda**

36. The Department was advised by representatives of the Government of Angola that funds had been approved for the construction of premises for a United Nations information centre in Luanda to serve the needs of the Portuguese-speaking countries in Africa. For its part, the Department was working with the Office of Legal Affairs on the preparation of a host country agreement. Posts for the new centre had been classified and the vacancy for the post of the director had been advertised.

# III. News services

## A. United Nations website

37. Structural elements of the Organization's website (www.un.org) were realigned to improve navigation and expand the use of common branding elements with a view to enhancing consistency and coherence of presentation. In addition, new web pages were created in the six official languages for observances mandated by the General Assembly.

38. From the beginning of 2011, reports on website traffic were based on data collected through the use of Google Analytics and thus presented a far more accurate picture of the situation. It became easier to analyse usage trends by language, geographical region, specific sites and date ranges.

39. Most of the websites produced by the Department were made available in all the official languages of the Organization. As it expanded the use of its multimedia products, such as the use of a video to accompany the most newsworthy item on the United Nation's homepage, the Department ensured that captions were available in all the official languages (see tables 1 and 2).

40. When assisting in the design and development of websites, the Department continued to build upon the cooperative arrangements established with universities in Belarus, China and Spain for the translation of web content into Chinese, Russian and Spanish. In collaboration with the Arabic Translation Service of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, the Arabic Website Unit of the Department of Public Information provided translation into Arabic. The two Departments recently expanded their partnership by signing agreements with the University of Damascus, the American University of Cairo and Saint Joseph University in Beirut. The ongoing arrangement between the Department of Public Information and the United Nations Volunteers programme also helped in making additional materials available in French on the United Nations website.

Table 1
**Visits to the United Nations website: top 10 countries, March-June 2011**

| | *Language* | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Country* | *Arabic* | *Chinese* | *English* | *French* | *Russian* | *Spanish* | ***Total*** |
| United States | 11 928 | 7 882 | 680 398 | 17 788 | 9 052 | 19 803 | **755 270** |
| China | 1 376 | 130 834 | 38 068 | 1 446 | 909 | 2 664 | **175 488** |
| Mexico | 214 | 162 | 25 557 | 649 | 115 | 140 012 | **166 934** |
| United Kingdom | 1 512 | 964 | 143 503 | 2 611 | 617 | 1 276 | **152 115** |
| Canada | 1 097 | 1 010 | 118 440 | 24 979 | 441 | 1 942 | **148 943** |
| France | 803 | 802 | 26 640 | 104 367 | 667 | 1 258 | **134 875** |
| Russian Federation | 256 | 170 | 13 281 | 605 | 110 249 | 311 | **124 954** |
| Spain | 408 | 187 | 22 648 | 1 920 | 340 | 90 376 | **116 064** |
| Australia | 512 | 876 | 103 909 | 492 | 275 | 282 | **106 531** |
| India | 331 | 146 | 90 025 | 323 | 88 | 173 | **91 975** |

Table 2
**Unique visits and page views to United Nations website, March-June 2011**

| *Language* | *Unique visits* | *Page views* |
|---|---|---|
| Arabic | 313 200 | 100 602 |
| Chinese | 887 868 | 2 519 136 |
| English | 8 054 234 | 30 243 489 |
| French | 1 131 371 | 4 032 868 |
| Russian | 732 598 | 2 546 944 |
| Spanish | 2 461 798 | 6 967 826 |
| **Total** | **13 581 069** | **47 316 365** |

41. As part of its efforts to ensure that the United Nations website is accessible to people with disabilities, including those with visual, hearing and motion impairments, the Department incorporated the use of captioning in the production of the daily news video on the Organization's home page and was working to extend captioning to other videos produced by the Department.

## B. United Nations News Centre

42. During the reporting period, more than 2,000 news stories were produced in English and French alone, with dispatches frequently supplemented by related audio and video links. The United Nations website continued to feature weekly news quizzes, photo stories and lists of the most-read stories in a given month. Ten in-depth interviews with United Nations officials and newsmakers were conducted between March and June. Regularly updated focus pages continued to provide one-stop access for documents and articles on complex issues. The *UN News Centre* also launched a new series of stories from the field to highlight the experiences of staff working on mission.

43. News aggregators and media outlets from more countries increased the frequency with which they picked up stories produced by the Department. During the reporting period, stories were reprinted in full by online media outlets such as *Philippines Times*, *New Kerala*, *India Blooms*, *North Korea Times*, *London Mercury*, *India Gazette*, *Cambodia Times*, Washington Bangla Radio, *Le Petit Journal du Laos*, *Afriquinfos*, *Africa Time* and All Africa.com, among others.

44. According to Google Analytics, the English-language pages of the *UN News Centre* receive some 600,000 visits and more than 1 million page views each month. During periods of peak news interest, those numbers spiked. In April, when the situation in the Middle East and North Africa was changing rapidly, the *UN News Centre* registered 845,000 visits and 1.5 million page views. In addition, some 43,000 subscribers received articles daily by e-mail.

## C. Radio, television and photography services

45. During the period under review, United Nations Radio increased the frequency of updates to partners by sending out e-mail alerts to radio stations promoting daily

coverage. It expanded its coverage of stories by adding spot reports from the field, in part by making greater use of Skype to conduct interviews. Top news stories included breaking news on the reaction and response of the United Nations to the uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa.

46. The Radio Section produced special features and related interviews on the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade, the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers and the high-level meeting on HIV and AIDS. The Section observed the twenty-fifth anniversary of Chernobyl with a slideshow accompanied by narration in multiple languages and marked the tenth session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues by producing a special on the human rights of women. United Nations Radio sent two reporters to Istanbul, Turkey, for the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries; the reporters filed 40 reports and packages in French and English, set up interviews in other languages through Skype and shared information with the *UN News Centre*.

47. A new radio interview feature called "From the field" was launched to enable top United Nations officials to talk about their recently completed missions. Interviews were held with Ivan Šimonović, the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, who spoke about a trip to Iraq, and Gulnara Shahinian, the Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, on her first fact-finding mission to Peru, among others.

48. During the reporting period, United Nations Radio took additional steps to upgrade its website and the underlying content management system to provide more flexibility in posting multimedia content, including video and slideshows, in different languages. This made it possible, for example, to provide live coverage of the election of the new President of the General Assembly on the website of the Spanish section of the Radio. The website of the Portuguese section of the Radio now regularly features videos; for example, an original video report that had been produced by the Radio covering the screening at Headquarters of the film *Rio* as part of the preparations for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development was posted on the website.

49. The following became partners of United Nations Radio during the reporting period: Vinha FM (Brazil), Radio Communitaria Maria Rosa FM (Brazil), Urban Cool Radio (United States), FM Sierras (Argentina), Canal Saúde/Fundação Oswaldo Cruz (Brazil), Radio Huancavilca 830 AM (Ecuador), Radio Indico (Mozambique) and Tela Non (Brazil).

50. United Nations Television provided live coverage of, among other events, the high-level meeting on HIV and AIDS and the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, which was broadcast live on Facebook — a first for a United Nations conference held away from Headquarters. These feeds were widely used by television news agencies, including Reuters and Associated Press Television News, and made available to broadcasters through UNifeed, the United Nations news syndicator. UNifeed continued to expand its outreach to non-governmental organizations, Government agencies, educational institutions and individuals relying on UNifeed for United Nations news content. More than 40 United Nations agencies, funds, peacekeeping missions and other entities provide content to the service.

51. Live feeds from events at Headquarters in New York and the United Nations Office at Geneva were aired on the United Nations channel on Time Warner Cable in parts of the New York metropolitan area and webcast globally through *UN Webcast*.

52. The Department's flagship television news magazine series, *21st Century*, which is aired by more than 60 international broadcasters, continued to gain recognition. A story on the role of the United Nations in the search for justice for the victims of the Khmer Rouge won a Gold World Medal at the prestigious New York Festivals International Television and Film Awards, in April 2011. *UN in Action*, a short-format series produced in English, French, Russian and Spanish, expanded the scope of its coverage, in part through joint projects with United Nations agencies, to highlight the Organization's work in areas such as economic and social development, the environment, human rights and health.

53. The Department partnered with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in co-producing *The World in a Day*, a film featuring the Secretary-General, and a video of a visit of the Secretary-General to Nigeria and Ethiopia to highlight the issue of maternal health. In 2011, a televised debate entitled *Face to Face*, developed by United Nations Television with the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and others, featured the Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Anthony Lake, and the Director-General of UNESCO, Irina Bokova. A project of United Nations Television and the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union involved the co-production of a series of documentaries on the Millennium Development Goals which was broadcast by Union members in the Asia and the Pacific region, as well as the United Nations Television channel. Over the past months, United Nations Television established new partnerships with a number of entities, including Newspoint TV (India), Shalom TV (United States), the Turkish Radio and Television Corporation (Turkey), the United States Institute of Peace (United States) and ViewChange.org (United States).

54. The Department continued to use the opportunities presented by screenings and other events to expand the reach of programmes produced by United Nations Television: several features on human rights and socio-economic issues were shown at the Latin American Studies department at Yale University; a feature story on the use of rape as a weapon of war in Bosnia and Herzegovina was screened at a session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva, at the Munich Film Festival and in the context of the "UNiTE to End Violence against Women" campaign in New York; a film about Afghan migrants in Greece was screened by the United Nations Association of New York. The Centro Niemeyer in Asturias, Spain, organized a major United Nations film series that included historical and prize-winning films from the Organization's film and video archives.

55. Through its live streaming service and by providing on-demand access to a wide range of archival material, *UN Webcast* made available more than 1,100 video clips and played a key role in the production and distribution of the daily news video for the United Nations home page. In addition, it facilitated internal communications by making webcasts of town hall meetings accessible to staff at Headquarters and in the field and by providing archives of videotaped training sessions.

56. Demand for the Department's photography service continued to grow during the reporting period. United Nations Photo covered nearly 650 events, including the visits of the Secretary-General to 33 countries, resulting in about 3,000 images being selected and made available to the public, in high resolution, on the United Nations Photo website. In addition to covering current events, United Nations Photo worked to increase the selection of legacy photographs documenting the historic accomplishments of the Organization available in the United Nations Photo Library. An additional 1,800 such images, retouched and digitized, were made available during the period under review.

### D. United Nations press releases and meetings coverage

57. Between March and June 2011, the meetings coverage operation produced 658 press releases, equal to 2,856 pages, in English and French. Of this total, 241 press releases covered meetings of the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, and their subsidiary bodies and specialized commissions. More than 240 press releases concerned statements, remarks and messages from the Secretary-General and the Deputy Secretary-General, as well as material from other United Nations offices and departments.

58. The Media Liaison and Accreditation Unit processed 935 permanent accreditations and 830 temporary press accreditations during the reporting period. It provided information and logistical assistance for 71 media stake-outs and assisted in the holding of 152 press conferences and briefings, which were attended by 2,193 journalists. The Unit promoted a variety of events to the press by sending out 77 electronic media alerts to about 4,000 recipients, including media organizations, permanent missions and offices throughout the United Nations system. It also promoted events through its Twitter feed.

## IV. Outreach services

### A. Deepening the involvement of civil society in the activities of the Organization

59. Preparations for the sixty-fourth Annual United Nations Department of Public Information/Non-Governmental Organizations Conference, entitled "Sustainable societies; responsive citizens", to be held from 3 to 5 September 2011 in Bonn, Germany, were progressing as the present report was being finalized. Participants will have the opportunity to develop a meaningful declaration and action plan that is expected to contribute to negotiations at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and to several major meetings in the run-up to the Conference. In addition, the outcomes of the Bonn Conference will contribute to the special session of the General Assembly on the tenth anniversary of the International Year of Volunteers, scheduled to be held in December 2011.

60. During the reporting period, the NGO Relations cluster organized 12 briefings, a communications workshop and a two-day annual orientation programme for representatives of newly associated non-governmental organizations. The total number of such organizations working with the Department reached 1,601.

## B. Global Model United Nations Conference

61. In preparation for the upcoming Global Model United Nations Conference, to be held in Incheon, Republic of Korea, 18 student leaders from around the world participated in a week-long workshop in New York, where they learned about the roles they would play at the Conference and communicated with United Nations officials and diplomats about the theme of the Conference: sustainable development. Looking forward, the Department plans to share its experience with other model United Nations programmes so as to bring them closer to the way in which the Organization actually functions.

## C. Creative Community Outreach Initiative

62. The third annual Envision forum, on the theme "Addressing global issues through documentaries", included a documentary film screening and a discussion series on themes related to the Millennium Development Goals, with a special focus on poverty and hunger.

63. One episode of *MasterChef Australia*, a highly rated Australian televised cooking show, was shot on United Nations premises during the tenth session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. For the episode, amateur chefs faced each other in a challenge inspired by indigenous dishes.

64. Since 1990, the Department has partnered with New York Festivals to reward exceptional media productions that exemplify the values and goals of the Organization. In 2011, the Department rewarded productions that focused on child protection, violence against women, democracy and the environment.

65. At the Iberoamerican Creative Summit, held in Aviles, Spain, Spanish, Portuguese and Latin American film and television professionals were introduced to the United Nations. The one-day gathering, hosted by the Centro Niemeyer, included three panel discussions focusing on gender equality, environmental sustainability and combating drugs and crime. It was the first time that such an event was held outside the United States.

## D. Celebrity advocacy

66. A number of United Nations messengers of peace and goodwill ambassadors joined the Secretary-General in recording video messages of solidarity with the people of Japan in the wake of the earthquake and tsunami of 11 March 2011. The messages, which were transmitted to the affected populations through Japanese broadcast and online partners, United Nations information centres and the Organization's social media channels, were viewed over 200,000 times online. The production and distribution of the recordings resulted from a collaboration between the Department, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and several United Nations entities, including the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), UNESCO and the United Nations Foundation.

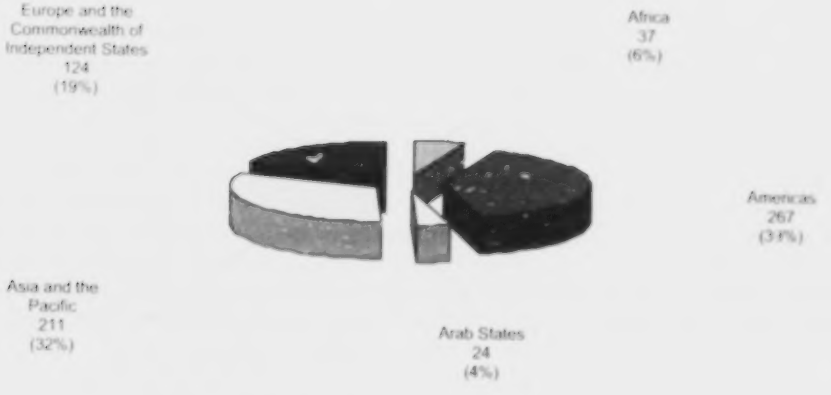
67. Messengers of Peace Wangari Maathai and Jane Goodall contributed to an online campaign of UNEP promoting tree-planting activities in support of the International Year of Forests.

## E. United Nations Academic Impact

68. By mid-July 2011, over 660 institutions of higher education and research in 104 countries had entered into a global partnership with the United Nations (see figure below). Activities by United Nations Academic Impact members included a virtual conference during the fifty-fifth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, a video-linked discussion with students at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa and editors of a new book on the measurement of poverty in New York; an international forum on vocational education, held in Shanghai, China; and an international law competition entitled "Youth for peace", held in Belarus. A symposium in Japan focused on rehabilitation and reconstruction support to the victims of the tsunami and earthquake. In March, representatives from 15 countries participated in a conference organized in the framework of the Black Sea Universities Network on the theme "Education and governance for sustainable development", held in Constantza, Romania. In May, the Pegaso Institute in Italy convened a symposium for Europe Day on the implementation of the principles of the United Nations Academic Impact initiative in Europe. In August, the Korean Council for University Education and Handong Global University will host a two-day forum in Seoul entitled "New partners for change: the United Nations and the world academic community". Institutions affiliated with the initiative continue to carry out activities in support of the initiative's goals, including an e-learning course in Pakistan on water filtration. A university in Argentina is planning to hold a global video contest on sustainable development.

Figure

**United Nations Academic Impact: distribution of members by region, as at 18 July 2011**



## F. Engaging the public

69. Through the United Nations Speakers Bureau, the Department coordinated 235 in-house briefings and videoconferences for visitors to the United Nations, in addition to outside speaking engagements reaching 15,500 individuals. The Department distributed numerous information kits, responded to 10,200 inquiries from the public and received a number of petitions with 4,048 signatories in total.

70. Almost 1 million visitors each year view the rotating roster of public exhibitions curated and installed by the Department in the Visitors' Lobby at Headquarters. The website for visitors also makes the exhibitions available online.

71. During the reporting period, seven exhibitions were organized:

(a) *The Living Legacy of 30 Million Untold Stories*, which was organized in remembrance of the victims of slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade;

(b) *DeterMined*, which showed pictures of victims of landmines while highlighting the work of Mine Action to save lives and protect livelihoods;

(c) *Champions to End Malaria*, which portrayed global progress and individual efforts in combating malaria;

(d) *25 Years after Chernobyl*, which paid tribute to victims of the Chernobyl disaster;

(e) *The Doors of Democracy*, which illustrated democracy projects in five regions of the world;

(f) *The Right to Water and Indigenous Peoples*, which showed the importance of water to indigenous peoples' way of life;

(g) *Law. Order. Peace.*, which highlighted United Nations peacekeeping efforts to improve the rule of law in war-torn countries.

72. In 2011, 94,615 visitors took guided tours of Headquarters, a slight decrease compared with the same period in 2010. The decrease was related to an unforeseen three-day building closure for the high-level meeting on HIV and AIDS, held from 8 to 10 June.

## G. Remembrance activities

73. On 2 May, the Holocaust and the United Nations Outreach Programme held the screening of and a discussion on the film *The Relief of Belsen*. The event was co-sponsored by the Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations in honour of the British liberators of the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp. On 20 May, the Programme organized an educators' workshop on fostering the defence of human rights within communities. The event included a workshop and a discussion with the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide and a leading human rights activist during which examples of racial discrimination during the Nazi era and contemporary cases of mass violence were discussed. The Programme continued its series of discussion papers for university students, the three most recent ones being: "The global prevention of genocide: learning from the Holocaust", "Holocaust education in South Africa" and "The law as an accelerator of Genocide".

74. The fourth annual commemoration of the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade was observed during the week of 25 March 2011 under the theme "The living legacy of 30 million untold stories". Activities at Headquarters included the screening of the film *Traces of the Trade*; an exhibition displaying recreations of the "middle passage", slave ships and a collection of artefacts and historic documents; a global videoconference for educators focusing on new research, curricula planning and teaching; panel discussions with university students and non-governmental organizations; a cultural event underscoring the nexus between the cuisines of Africa and the Caribbean; a special commemorative meeting of the General Assembly and a "living legacy" concert featuring performers from Africa, the Americas and the Caribbean. The Department also utilized its network of information centres to undertake a range of activities, including the screening of the UNESCO film *Slave Routes: A Global Vision* in Almaty (Kazakhstan), Antananarivo, Canberra, Dakar, Geneva and Ouagadougou and the organization of workshops, cultural events, panel discussions and exhibits.

## H. Reham Al-Farra Memorial Journalists' Fellowship Programme

75. Preparations for the thirty-first annual Reham Al-Farra Memorial Journalists' Fellowship Programme, organized by the Department and held from 12 September to 21 October 2011, are progressing. Fourteen developing countries and countries with economies in transition have submitted candidates, namely: Bahamas, Barbados, Cameroon, Croatia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gambia, Georgia, Ghana, Kiribati, Oman, Palau, Swaziland, Tajikistan and United Arab Emirates.

76. The 2011 programme will give participating journalists the opportunity to engage in practical reporting work at Headquarters. Leveraging know-how and skills within the Department, the journalists will shadow United Nations media professionals in their respective field of expertise and produce stories with them.

## I. United Nations flagship publications

77. In May, the sixty-first edition of the *Yearbook of the United Nations* (2007) was launched at a panel discussion on "Getting the facts right", held in partnership with the United Nations Academic Impact initiative. For the first time, the Yearbook was issued also as an e-book. An audience that included students from local universities, guest panellists from academia, journalists and representatives of the media explored, in today's media context, topics covered by the 2007 Yearbook such as progress towards the Millennium Development Goals and attacks on humanitarian workers.

78. The 2011 edition of the United Nations primer, *Basic Facts about the United Nations*, a perennial bestseller, was published in May. As well as explaining the role played by the principal organs of the United Nations and the other organizations of the United Nations system, *Basic Facts* explores the ways in which the Organization contributes to international peace and security, economic and social development, human rights, humanitarian action, international law and peacekeeping operations. The 2011 edition also features the newly revised organization chart of the United

Nations system. French and Spanish editions are due to follow towards the end of the year. Translations into local languages are already under way.

79. The first issue in 2011 of the *UN Chronicle*, which focused on HIV and AIDS, was published and distributed in May. Contributors included Michel Sidibé, Executive Director of UNAIDS; Pedro Basualdo, former Secretary of State of Argentina; Marc Conant, one of the first physicians to diagnose and treat AIDS; and Carol Kidu, Minister for Community Development in Papua New Guinea. In their articles, the authors analysed such issues as HIV and the workplace, HIV and education, and women and HIV.

80. The second issue in 2011 of *UN Chronicle*, dedicated to peace and security as part of the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of Dag Hammarskjold's death, went to press at the end of June.

## J. Sales and marketing of United Nations publications

81. Work continued on the expansion of the Department's e-publishing programme. That included entering into an agreement for e-book distribution with JSTOR, the pre-eminent not-for-profit service that enables access to scholarly content; the publication of 31 new e-books for mobile devices; and plans for converting more than 300 popular United Nations titles into formats suitable for mobile devices. Two new mobile applications were launched: AIDSInfo and Innovations in Public Governance. The United Nations e-book collection was in the planning phase and will enter the building phase in August 2011. On the traditional book front, three new distribution agreements were signed with book distributors in sub-Saharan Africa. A total of 131 new books were published in the period under review.

## K. Internal communications and outreach through the web

82. The Secretariat Intranet, iSeek, continued to be accessed by staff and personnel worldwide. The iSeek team posted 270 stories on a range of issues including International Women's Day, UN-Women, peacekeeping, the transatlantic slave trade, World Environment Day, diversity, multilingualism and the International Year for People of African Descent.

83. The Department continued to develop websites to support its outreach goals. New sites were developed for the sixty-fourth Annual United Nations Department of Public Information/Non-Governmental Organization Conference and the 2011 Global Model United Nations Conference. Construction of the websites for the United Nations Academic Impact initiative and the oral history project of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library was in progress.

## L. Visual identity

84. The graphic design team of the Department, which provides tailored design solutions for print and web products, worked on the messenger-of-peace pins, the eradication of poverty campaign, the Palestinian exhibit, a book on the League of

Nations and the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, among other projects.

## M. Library services

85. With the reopening of a library training space, the Library's training programme was reinvigorated in the spring of 2011. From March to June 1,370 staff members, delegates, representatives of non-governmental organizations and others participated in library trainings.

*Depository libraries*

86. The data-collection exercise for the review of United Nations depository libraries ended in May 2011. The aim of the review is to ensure that depository libraries receive appropriate United Nations information in the formats that are most useful for readers. Increasingly, depository libraries, including those in developing countries, are indicating that they have improved access to the Internet. While the Library continues to encourage depository libraries to consider the advantages of electronic access, inequities in the area of such access will be taken into account. The Library is also working with depository libraries to strengthen outreach efforts in connection with United Nations-related issues.

87. The Library has continued to engage United Nations depository libraries through training programmes, including for 70 Latin American librarians arranged by United Nations Information Centre Mexico and a targeted training in United Nations statistical resources and documentation for librarians at major research libraries in the New York metropolitan area. Initial results from the review of depository libraries indicate that 87 per cent of the libraries would like more training in the use of United Nations information resources.

*Electronic resources and United Nations digital information*

88. The Library helps 55 United Nations entities to "deliver as one" by serving as the coordinating secretariat for the United Nations System Electronic Information Acquisition Consortium, which facilitates subscriptions to a constantly growing list of electronic resources for its members in 47 countries. In response to users' needs for quality information at any time and at any location, the Library is transitioning, to the extent possible, from print collections to electronic resources and preparing new mechanisms for the delivery of electronic resources onto the desktops of staff members worldwide. The Library has continued preparations for a new platform to provide stakeholders with both digitized and born-digital United Nations information. The new platform will help safeguard United Nations digital assets for future generations.

89. At the same time, the Library is seeking to ensure the preservation and accessibility of the published records of the Organization since 1946. Having completed the main series of Security Council documents, the digitization programme will focus on earlier General Assembly documentation, including a retrospective content analysis of the documents so that they can become widely and easily accessible.

90. In the period covering March through June 2011, bibliographic metadata records were created for 6,600 United Nations documents and publications to ensure their easy retrieval. An authoritative index of terms and the thesaurus in the six official languages were continuously being maintained. Those metadata records form the core information for the United Nations Bibliographic Information System (UNBISnet), the Index to Proceedings and the Official Document System. As at 30 June 2011, 860,700 bibliographic metadata records had been recorded in UNBISnet, providing a complete voting history on all General Assembly and Security Council resolutions.

91. Looking ahead, an effort is under way to review how the Dag Hammarskjold Library can enhance its services and adapt to the many changes that have occurred both in the United Nations and in the area of information technology. A departmental working group on library improvements, formed in May 2011, was tasked with making recommendations covering future strategy, technology and work processes.

## V. Use of social and "new" media in the Department

92. Departmental guidelines on the use of social media were finalized and will be shared across the Secretariat as a suggested model for other departments and offices. The number of followers of the United Nations Twitter account, maintained by the Strategic Communications Division, recently surpassed 400,000. Based on its "klout" score, which is widely recognized as one of the best ways to measure social media influence, the Organization's Twitter account is the top-rated account in the United Nations system. On Facebook, the posts of the United Nations Information Centre registered more than 3 million views. The Department also maintains two accounts focusing on the Millennium Development Goals. On Facebook, the posts on the Goals account registered more than 1 million views during the reporting period.

93. Social media were effectively utilized to publicize the Nelson Mandela International Day campaign. Promotional messages and images were disseminated through Twitter, Facebook, Tumblr and Flickr. Posts on the United Nations Facebook page registered more than 12,000 "impressions" each.

94. In the field, an increasing number of United Nations information centres used social media tools to disseminate information on the Secretary-General's messages, major reports and developments, and to reach and engage local audiences (see table 3).

95. United Nations Information Centre Beirut is a leading member of the social media task force of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, which is responsible for the development, management and supervision of the Commission's social media strategy.

96. United Nations Information Centre Washington, D.C., published several messages on its Facebook page and through Twitter in observance of the International Year of Forests. The Director of the Centre participated in a town hall meeting that was streamed on Facebook to discuss the role of the United Nations in Haiti.

Table 3
**Social networking tools used by United Nations information centres**

| *Facebook* | *Twitter* | *YouTube* | *Flickr* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ankara | Ankara | Bogota | Bogota |
| Baku | Bogota | Brussels | Colombo |
| Bogota | Brussels | Jakarta | Geneva |
| Brussels | Canberra | Kathmandu | Jakarta |
| Bucharest | Geneva | La Paz | |
| Buenos Aires | Jakarta | Lima | |
| Cairo | La Paz | Mexico City | |
| Dar es Salaam | Mexico City | Rio de Janeiro | |
| Jakarta | New Delhi | Tokyo | |
| La Paz | Pretoria | Washington, D.C. | |
| Lima | Rio de Janeiro | Yerevan | |
| Manila | Tunis | | |
| Mexico City | Vienna | | |
| New Delhi | Washington, D.C. | | |
| Prague | Yerevan | | |
| Pretoria | | | |
| Rio de Janeiro | | | |
| Tokyo | | | |
| Tunis | | | |
| Vienna | | | |
| Warsaw | | | |
| Washington, D.C. | | | |
| Yaounde | | | |
| Yerevan | | | |

97. In September 2010, the News and Media Division of the Department launched a channel on *Sina Weibo*, the popular microblogging platform in Chinese. With nearly 6,000 messages covering the latest news and key events, *UN Weibo* had close to 662,000 fans registered by June 2011. Video channels were also launched on Youku and Tudou, the top-two Chinese video-sharing websites, with over 470 clips covering a broad range of United Nations developments and issues featured on each of them. The total number of views on both channels reached 2.8 million. At the same time, the Department continued to enhance video content on the

Organization's YouTube channel in French and Spanish, with some 150 videos posted in the two languages.

98. During the reporting period, strategic changes were made to the management of the *UN News Centre*'s presence on new media platforms, including with regard to the number and type of content posted per day and the creation of separate accounts in English and French. Those decisions generated immediate results: the number of Facebook fans increased by roughly 9,000, bringing the total to almost 28,000 and the number of Twitter followers almost doubled to 8,000 in English and French combined.

99. The increased use of new media has enabled the *UN News Centre* to work more closely with its United Nations partners. For example, the *UN News Centre* participated in an ad hoc new media team led by UNAIDS that disseminated information in support of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on HIV and AIDS. The French-language Twitter account was particularly useful, as many United Nations organizations do not have public information outlets in French.

100. The addition of a feature that makes it possible to share *UN News Centre* stories proved to be popular among users, who shared the weekly news quiz some 2,000 times during the reporting period. Other popular items included articles on human rights and news items on developments in the Arab world and on work done to protect refugees, which were shared more than 800 times shortly after posting. *UN Webcast* uses social media tools to alert viewers to upcoming events scheduled for live coverage. As the unit responsible for maintaining the United Nations channel on YouTube, *UN Webcast* continuously updated videos on the page and took steps to enhance its interactive aspects, in part by encouraging user response to videos. A series of videos posted on the Organization's YouTube channel that featured messages of solidarity with the Japanese people in the wake of the Japan earthquake and tsunami disaster drew thousands of viewers.

101. The United Nations Photo Flickr "photostream", where over 3,000 images have been posted, reached a milestone in April 2011, when it registered 1 million views. That number has continued to grow steadily since then.

102. In February and March 2011, the United Nations Academic Impact initiative, in partnership with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, organized a series of four e-discussions on the theme "Building a future for today's youth: improving access to education". Harnessing the power of new media, the series was hosted on the initiative's Facebook page. A consolidated global report on the virtual discussion was presented to the Economic and Social Council in April.

103. The sales and marketing presence of the United Nations on the social media platforms provided by Facebook and Twitter continued to grow: close to 3,500 users follow the Organization on Facebook and 15,500 users follow it on Twitter. Most of the Facebook users live in the United States, followed by Indonesia and Pakistan.

## VI. Conclusions

104. The developments and examples outlined in the present report serve to once again provide proof that communications and public engagement are not and cannot be solely supportive endeavours: they must be integral to policies, programmes and

change. Furthermore, for communications efforts to be successful, they must be sustained both locally and globally and be efficiently resourced.

105. The relentless and often unexpected pace of everyday life places demands on the work of the Department at both the global and the field levels. Its partnerships with the media, other parts of the United Nations system, civil society and the academic community, and the enthusiasm of young people must be sustained both locally and globally, through familiar and novel means. There is much that the Department can do, and is doing, at Headquarters and in the field, and it is vital that these activities remain financially and operationally secure. The Department will continue to enhance its means of reaching out, while invigorating its capacity to be a forum for ideas and imagination where the world and its peoples can "reach in".